

**A's offense a no-show in fifth straight loss**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

For the second time in three days, the A's went down quietly — and quickly.

The pace of Sunday's 4-0 defeat to the Los Angeles Angels would have pleased Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig, who is concerned about the plodding nature of games. But it didn't reflect well on Oakland's offense.

Angels right-hander Joel Pineiro threw a four-hitter to help the home team complete a three-game sweep before a crowd of 41,569.

That completed a 1-5 road trip for the A's, who won their opener in Texas but then dropped five straight. They've been outscored 32-5 during their losing streak, the first time the A's have been held to five runs over a five-game stretch since Sept. 8-12, 1979.

"We've got some guys pressing a little bit," A's manager Bob Geren said. "They've got some 0-fers, some games mounting up on them, and it's getting on their nerves."

Sunday looked identical to Friday, when Joe Saunders held the A's to four hits in another 4-0 defeat. Both games clocked in at just under 2 hours, 10 minutes.

The A's, 18-20, still trail first-place Texas by just two games. But the Angels, who were struggling coming into the weekend, now trail the A's by just a half-game for second place.

Oakland will continue dropping in the standings without more offense.

Pineiro (3-4) struck out five and walked one in 98 pitches. He was a tough matchup for Trevor Cahill (1-2), who was solid in seven innings,

allowing three runs on five hits with no walks.

"We've faced a few tough pitchers," A's first baseman Daric Barton said. " ... We have a lot of confidence in our team. We're not worried about the past week."

The A's called up Jack Cust on Saturday, and catcher Kurt Suzuki returned from the disabled list Sunday and hit cleanup.

Suzuki is tied for the team lead with four homers, and he was sidelined 19 games. The man he's tied with, Eric Patterson, had just two career homers before this season.

Although the A's lack of power is glaring, they're not getting much spark from their table-setters, either. Rajai Davis, a key contributor early in the season, is hitting .230 and no longer starting regularly.

Cliff Pennington, who started hot and was moved from the ninth spot to leadoff, is 7 for 42 over his last 11 games and hitting .239. Barton, the No. 2 hitter, had a 3 for 25 road trip.

The A's are at their best when they're forcing the action on the bases, but they've stolen just five bases in May.

"We like to put pressure on the opposition by different means," Geren said. "But if we don't get guys on base, or we fall behind early, it's not much of a factor. We're not getting a lot of walks or hitting homers either."

The Angels got a run off Cahill in the second, aided by A's center fielder Patterson misplaying a Torii Hunter fly ball and letting it drop for a leadoff double.

Bobby Abreu hit a two-run homer off Cahill in the sixth.

The A's hope the expected return of second baseman Mark Ellis and center fielder Coco Crisp from the DL — both begin rehab assignments today — can help give their offense some juice.

"We've been making a lot of additions and subtractions, a lot of piecing together," designated hitter Eric Chavez said.

"I definitely hope (getting guys healthy) helps. You never know what type of team you'll have once you get everybody back on the field."

TODAY:

Mariners (Ryan Rowland-Smith 0-3) at A's (Gio Gonzalez 3-3), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

### **A's update: Reliever Cedrick Bowers, 32, savors major league call-up**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Reliever Bowers enjoying rare call-up to big leagues

ANAHEIM — Perseverance has paid off for left-handed reliever Cedrick Bowers, called up from Triple-A Sacramento before the A's 4-0 defeat Sunday to the Los Angeles Angels.

Bowers, 32, was drafted in 1996 by Tampa Bay. But in 14-plus professional seasons, he's pitched in just five big league games. Those came in 2008 with Colorado.

"It's awesome," Bowers said of being promoted. "I can't really explain it."

A Florida native, Bowers spent eight seasons in the Rays organization before he headed overseas. He pitched in Japan from 2004-06 and Korea in 2007.

After his stint with Colorado, he spent last season in the Phillies organization and signed a minor league deal with the A's in December. He held hitters to a .161 batting average with Sacramento and struck out 26 in 172/3 innings.

"This is what I chose to do," he said. "I always felt I could compete at a high level. It's all about being in the right place at the right time."

Bowers' promotion was part of a flurry of moves for the A's. Catcher Kurt Suzuki was activated from the disabled list, and catcher Josh Donaldson was optioned. Right-hander Justin Duchscherer, as expected, went back on the DL with left hip pain, and reliever Henry Rodriguez was recalled.

To make room on the 40-man roster for Bowers, reliever Chad Gaudin was designated for assignment. Gaudin allowed a combined eight runs and four homers over his final two outings. His 8.83 ERA was the highest among American League relievers.

"It's hard to get comfortable when you never know when you're going to pitch," said Gaudin, who had a five-day layoff before getting roughed up against Texas on Wednesday.

The A's have 10 days to trade or release Gaudin if he clears waivers. He can refuse a minor league assignment and become a free agent if he wishes.

In a crazy turn of events, Rodriguez was demoted Saturday and called up Sunday without ever leaving the A's. Duchscherer's quick return to the DL opened a spot for him.

Duchscherer plans to see a doctor this week to determine if his hip requires surgery.

Manager Bob Geren indicated that Vin Mazzaro could be called up to start Thursday against Detroit in Duchscherer's place.

### **Chin Music: Busy day for A's transactions — Suzuki back from DL, Duchscherer returns to DL, and Gaudin designated for assignment**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/16/2010 12:14PM

It was one of those pregame scenes we've seen so often in the A's clubhouse over the past couple of seasons — some players packing their things and heading out, while others are just showing up and getting settled in.

The A's made six transactions on a very active Sunday morning:

–Catcher Kurt Suzuki was activated from the DL, while catcher Josh Donaldson was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento. Suzuki, who had a strained rib cage muscle, played each of the past two days for Sacramento — 7 innings Friday night and 4 innings yesterday. He's in the A's lineup and batting cleanup today.

–Right-hander Justin Duchscherer, as expected, went back to the DL with a left hip injury, and reliever Henry Rodriguez was recalled. Yes, Rodriguez was just optioned yesterday when Duchscherer was activated from the DL. Rodriguez was scheduled to fly out this morning, but when Duchscherer got hurt again, the A's added Rodriguez back to the roster. Players normally have to stay in the minors at least 10 days after being optioned, but they can come back sooner if they replace an injured player. That must be pretty nice when you can get sent to the minors and never have to leave the big league clubhouse ...

–Reliever Cedrick Bowers was called up from Sacramento, and fellow reliever Chad Gaudin was designated for assignment to make room on the 40-man roster for Bowers. Not too shocking to see the Gaudin move. He was hit hard the past two outings and was being used sparingly. As with Edwar Ramirez (who was designated Saturday), the A's have 10 days to trade or release Gaudin, or send him to the minors if he clears waivers.

How about this story for Bowers? He was drafted in 1996 by Tampa Bay, but in 14 professional seasons has spent just FIVE GAMES in the majors. That came in 2008 with Colorado. He also spent time pitching in Japan and Korea. Talk about perseverance. ... Manager Bob Geren said the lefty is a 1-2 inning guy out of the bullpen, and he's available today.

Quick story on Bowers from spring training: On the first day I arrived at camp, he actually introduced himself and struck up a conversation with me. That was pretty cool ... normally beat writers spend the first few days hunting players down and making sure we say hi to everybody. Bowers flipped the script on me. Impressive ...

–Vin Mazzaro is a strong bet to return to the bigs and take Duchscherer's start Thursday against Detroit. Geren said that would be Mazzaro's day to pitch for Sacramento anyway. "That's definitely a good option. We still haven't decided on that," Geren said.

Duchscherer doesn't have a doctor's appointment scheduled yet, but he'll see somebody to get more clarity on his left hip. Right now the A's are calling it left hip inflammation, but we'll know in a few days how serious it is.

Whew ... and finally, the lineups:

A's: Pennington SS, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Chavez DH, Cust LF, Rosales 2B, Patterson CF; Cahill RHP.

Angels: Aybar SS, Kendrick 2B, Abreu RF, Hunter CF, Morales 1B, Matsui DH, Ryan LF, Napoli C, Wood 3B; Pineiro RHP.

### **Does keeping A's make cents for Oakland?**

By Chris Metinko, Oakland Tribune

As attendance at the Oakland Coliseum dwindles and the A's await a decision from Major League Baseball about the future of the franchise, some — those who do not bleed green and gold — may wonder: What does a major league team bring to a city?

Not much, at least financially, experts say.

"I don't mean to throw a wet blanket on all of this, but typically the impact on a city of a major league team is relatively minimal," said Paul Staudohar, professor emeritus of business administration at Cal State East Bay.

Just last month, Oakland officials and a group trying to keep the A's in the city released a study arguing that building a 36,000-seat, \$500 million baseball-only stadium in the Jack London Square area would immediately create 1,661 construction jobs in Oakland and generate about \$2.6 billion in total economic activity for the city during the next 30 years.

The study, commissioned by the group Let's Go Oakland — a collection of business and community leaders trying to keep the team at home — illustrated the substantial return the city and Alameda County would receive on its investment if a stadium was built, the group's co-founder Doug Boxer said.

However, some such as Roger Noll, an economist at Stanford University who follows the business of professional sports and stadiums, see things differently.

"When you talk about economic activity, what exactly are you talking about?" Noll asked. "What you really want to know is what the net economic activity of such a project is."

When considering if a project such as a new stadium would be a good investment, Noll said, one should consider what else could be done with the same plot of land and with the same amount of money invested in it.

The number of construction jobs the study projected a stadium project would create seems high, Noll said. He also noted that good redevelopment projects usually produce one job for every \$10,000 invested.

"In this case it would be about 1,700 jobs for \$500 million?" Noll asked, pointing out that would be one construction job created for about every \$294,000 spent.

Noll did acknowledge, "Of course, this isn't a normal redevelopment project."

Boxer agreed, comparing the impact of this prospective development to that of AT&T Park across the Bay — a stadium project many acknowledge has been successful in reinvigorating the China Basin area of San Francisco.

In addressing how the Let's Go Oakland report was commissioned, Boxer said his group was very "hands off" in its approach and hired Gruen Gruen + Associates to undertake the study. Boxer said he believes the numbers in the study are modest and rely heavily on real-world examples such as the stadiums built in Denver and San Diego.

Leo Kahane, a professor of economics Cal State East Bay, said he can agree the economic activity estimates do seem modest.

"I think that number could be on the low end. I mean, \$2.6 billion over 30 years is not exactly a lot if you think about it," said Kahane, adding one also must weigh what other revenue-generating project could be put in the stadium's place.

Kahane also pointed out the potential stadium construction may not actually be creating jobs, because there is a chance many workers would be completing other projects if the stadium development did not exist.

"I understand where the economy is, so construction may be slow right now, but these workers perhaps would have other jobs," Kahane said. "Also, these are not permanent jobs. The stadium is built and these people simply go home."

The Let's Go Oakland study does state the city would save 885 jobs related to baseball operations at the Coliseum while creating an additional 162 jobs if a new stadium was built. However, economists say that illustrates another problem with helping to build multimillion stadiums — many of the jobs created are seasonal, part-time jobs. The truly marquee, high-paying positions professional sports teams bring are those for players, coaches and management. Many of those people, however, do not live year-round in the community, so they do not have a strong impact on the local economy.

"Members of baseball teams do not typically live in the city they play (in)," Noll said. "So it's a little different. How many NUMMI workers commuted from Florida to go to work?"

The small amount of jobs that do go to local residents likely would still become available via other entertainment venues where people would spend their money in lieu of going to baseball games.

"People are still going to spend their entertainment dollars, be it at the movies, restaurants or wherever," Kahane said.

Economists also question the money local government would see from a new stadium. Oakland officials have acknowledged the city and perhaps the county would be on the hook to provide the land, infrastructure and parking for a new baseball stadium.

However, the sites being considered have values ranging from \$30 million to more than \$100 million. Though the study claims the city and county would see large property tax increases from a \$4.7 billion rise in property value over 30 years from land around a new stadium, some say that's not true.

"There are many examples of property value actually dropping around new sporting complexes because people don't want to live near all that congestion and noise," Kahane said.

Boxer disputes that notion. He said baseball parks, unlike football stadiums, have shown to increase property value of surrounding parcels. He pointed to the fact baseball parks are in use many days of the year, unlike football stadiums. Boxer added the Jack London Square area could thrive like China Basin considering its waterfront view and other attractions.

"The area is prime and ready to take off," Boxer said.

Nevertheless, some do see a less tangible value of keeping the A's in Oakland.

"I really do believe the A's mean a lot to Oakland," Staudohar said. "I would hate to see them leave, yet I think that's a very real possibility."

Fans of the green and gold also see a value beyond dollars and cents.

"This team means everything to this city. It's part our cultural identity," said Garth Kimball, who used to be a season-ticket holder until the team started to threaten to move. "The A's are a source of pride for our, at times, downtrodden city."

Boxer agrees.

"The psychology of the cities is closely aligned with its sports franchise," said Boxer, whose first A's game was a 1972 World Series contest. "It's a source of pride for a city. No matter how bad times get, you can always go to a Major League Baseball game."

### **The blueprint for ostracizing a fan base**

By Monte Poole, Bay Area News Group columnist

With an ugly, dilapidated ballpark and an unexceptional roster, the new owners of the local baseball team knew their only chance of realizing their vision would require everybody on the payroll to roll up their sleeves.

They'd have to upgrade the roster. That would cost money.

They'd have to develop a personality. That, too, would cost money.

They'd have to clean up the yard. That would take time and cost money.

They'd have to reach out beyond the fan base and into the community, a task that would require time and a sincere effort to bond with the locals.

This was the blueprint followed in 1992 by new Giants ownership — behind then-managing partner Peter Magowan — to achieve the goal of building a ballpark in San Francisco.

In one nine-day period that December, the Giants spent \$43.75 million to sign free agent star Barry Bonds, a Bay Area native, and rewarded popular coach Dusty Baker with a promotion to manager.

With a few coats of paint, some rearranging of seats, a thorough cleansing and clever marketing, Candlestick Park suddenly was less objectionable. More to the point, the owners had crafted a warm, caring image — and saw a dramatic jump in attendance, from 1.56 million fans in 1992 to a record 2.6 million in '93.

That's how Magowan and his partners turned the dump that was Candlestick into the privately financed jewel that is AT&T Park, which opened

in 2000. In less than a decade, the Giants had remodeled themselves and doubled their attendance.

This brilliant strategy was envied by some, reviled by others — and totally dismissed by the men who five years later bought the Oakland A's.

When Lew Wolff and John Fisher took over the A's in 2005, they made clear their discontent with the Coliseum. They got little argument. Even the most devoted fans conceded the old gray bowl off the Nimitz at 66th Avenue might be the ugliest yard in the big leagues.

But the tactics of Wolff — though Fisher owns the greatest financial stake in the team, he's a mostly silent partner — have been clumsy at best. That, along with the team's declining performance and several other factors, has driven away an appreciable percentage of A's fans. Attendance has dropped every year since 2005 and currently, despite reasonable prices, Oakland ranks 28th (averaging 16,415) among 30 teams.

What happened?

(1): With vociferous criticism of the Coliseum, Wolff alienated part of a community that was willing to spend its discretionary income on a quality baseball product. Bit by bit, statement after statement, he drove a wedge between the franchise and some of its fans. The team is on pace to draw fewer than 1.3 million for the first time since 1998, when it wasn't competing against a palace across the Bay.

(2): Oakland general manager Billy Beane, the prince of the sport a few years ago, has assembled only one captivating, winning roster since 2004. Though the '06 A's went deeper into the playoffs than any other team under Beane, who became GM after the 1997 season, the nucleus lasted only one year. That was the last of eight consecutive winning seasons, which have been followed by three straight losing ones.

(3): Once the king of promotions under owner Charlie O. Finley, the A's have been less than creative in peddling their product. Some promotions, like free parking on Tuesdays, are not marketed especially well. Others, like \$12 tickets dedicated to the home area code of pitcher Dallas Braden when he's pitching, are discovered late.

(4): The Coliseum experience has become increasingly unpopular, with fans griping about expensive parking (\$17 per car), limited access to concessions and surly concessionaires. Fans who used to arrive early to watch the A's take batting practice, which can be more spectacular than the game, now moan that the gates customarily open too late for this.

(5): The economy has taken a precipitous dive, especially in California.

These forces have combined to slow A's attendance, but friction with ownership seems to be the easiest to correct.

"What (Wolff and Fisher) don't seem to understand," said a longtime sports executive who requested anonymity, "is that fans own the team — not financially, but emotionally."

Some of the A's most devoted fans believe Wolff is disingenuous and insincere in his efforts to stay in Oakland, that he and Fisher don't like the demographics, prefer to be elsewhere and are far more committed to exploring alternative sites — despite Oakland being the geographic center of the Bay Area and drawing mainly from a 75-mile radius.

"I feel, in some regards, the cow is out of the barn," said Oakland's Garth Kimball, a co-founder of [BaseballOakland.com](http://BaseballOakland.com), a website devoted to the A's and the heritage of baseball in Oakland. "Wolff made a huge mistake slamming the fan base after the city of Oakland went to Major League Baseball for assistance after he stopped the Fremont plan."

With the team in Oakland, where there is a facility, and the owners investing most of their money and energy on San Jose, or Fremont as a compromise, much of the established fan base feels neglected while a new fan base has yet to be cultivated.

Though some hard-core fans like Kimball are convinced Wolff never seriously considered building a new ballpark in Oakland, others, like Mike Sobek, of Dublin, won't complain and won't consider withdrawing support.

"To me, that's a cop-out because a true fan doesn't give up that easily," said Sobek, a longtime season-ticket holder. "The owners have a right to run the business the best way they can. Even if I don't agree with some of the things they do, that's not going to stop me from supporting the team."

It hasn't stopped Kimball and others, like Jorge Leon, the San Leandro lab analyst who was ejected from the Coliseum on April 7 for holding up a sign critical of Wolff. He has twice met with the managing partner and remains dissatisfied.

"I wouldn't have a problem if they just said they're going to work with the city, really look at viable sites and show they care about the fan — and market the team like the A's used to," Leon said. "I understand they need a ballpark, but I don't think they ever wanted to stay here."

The sore point is that Wolff occasionally has talked up Oakland but has acted almost entirely in the interests of Fremont or San Jose.

Magowan and his partners talked up San Francisco — and backed up what they said. Though previous owners considered selling to interests that would have moved the team — it came within a league vote of moving to Tampa in 1992 — this group said it was committed to staying in town.

And, yes, the new owners knew San Francisco voters in 1987 rejected a proposed downtown stadium. Previous owner Bob Lurie studied Santa Clara in 1990 and San Jose shortly thereafter and got nowhere. That's how the Giants almost wound up in Florida.

The new owners, however, would not be denied, Candlestick notwithstanding.

"I dragged (then-Mayor) Frank Jordan into the bathrooms," Magowan recalls. "We wanted him to see how bad it was and we wanted to believe we could do better."

"We asked fans for their ideas. We brought the fences in. We added an old-fashioned fence design. We put in the foghorn. We added bleachers in left field. We got involved in AIDS fundraising. We wanted to be community- and fan-friendly, which meant improving employee-customer relations. Our employees responded."

The purpose, Magowan said, was to charm the non-sports fans who had voted down previous proposals.

Some thought the owners were more concerned with image than quality. But there was a vision. Courting potential customers, and keeping them satisfied, was believed to be the best way to get a ballpark. Even though the 49ers were the big dogs in San Francisco sports, voters approved a 1996 ballot measure to build a downtown yard with private funds.

"The Giants were fighting the same battle the A's are fighting today," said the sports executive. "They were in a substandard facility and they talked about it as a substandard facility. But (the Giants) acted to rectify it and ended up with a ballpark."

"In this situation, ownership's message is clear: 'This is not for us.' At the same time, the message being sent by much of the fan base is: 'We think there is a future here.' It's a matter of getting the owners to believe there is as much or more potential in Alameda (County) and Contra Costa County than there is in the South Bay."

Leon, who last met with Wolff on Mother's Day, when Braden pitched a perfect game, said discussions convince him that Wolff is more interested in residential-retail development than building a contender.

Kimball and Leon, however, still go to the games. They still support the team, even while denouncing the ownership. They just don't have a lot of company at the ballpark.

### **A's get swept on Piñeiro's four-hitter**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

When the A's came into town Friday, the Angels were in a funk, dropping 10 of their previous 13.

Then the defending AL West champions beat Dallas Braden in his first start following his perfect game, and Saturday they thumped the Oakland bullpen after Justin Duchscherer was scratched before the game.

On Sunday, the Angels made it a clean sweep, with a 4-0 victory over the A's, who are now the slumping team with a five-game skid.

Total combined score at Anaheim: 20-3. And two Angels pitchers who'd gotten off to slow starts threw shutouts: Joe Saunders on Friday and Joel Piñeiro on Sunday. Each allowed four hits.

Did this series against Oakland awaken the division's slumbering giant?

"I think any team would have rebounded good this weekend," A's designated hitter Eric Chavez said. "We didn't hit well, we didn't play very well."

A's starter Trevor Cahill was pretty good, however. He went a season-high seven innings, issued no walks, and his only real mistake was a fastball that Bobby Abreu lifted to left-center for a two-run homer in the sixth.

Cahill also allowed a run in the second, but chalk that up to Eric Patterson's poor pursuit of Torii Hunter's deep flyball to center. Patterson lost track of the wall, turned too soon and couldn't make a play.

"You hate to make mistakes like that," Patterson said. "I feel like if I got back to the wall, I definitely would have had it."

Hunter wound up with a double and scored on a base hit by Hideki Matsui. Patterson is tied for the team lead in homers, but his occasional defensive and baserunning lapses might cost him when the A's have to make a move this week to add center fielder Coco Crisp to the roster.

During the A's five-game losing streak, they've been outscored 32-5, the first time they've been held to five runs over a five-game span since Sept. 8-12, 1979. Manager Bob Geren said he believes many of the players are pressing as their O-fers grow; there will be a hitters' meeting before tonight's game.

This isn't a club that wins low-scoring games, either: When the A's score three runs or fewer, they're 1-19. Four runs or more, and they're 17-1.

The A's remain in second place in the AL West, two games behind Texas, with the Angels 2 1/2 back.

Oakland has dropped six of seven road series, but has won five of six home series.

"We've run into some good arms on the road, but teams go through ruts like this," Patterson said. "We'll go home and try to win as many as we can and the next trip, try to figure out how to win some on the road, too."

### **Duchscherer probably done for the season**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Justin Duchscherer** went on the disabled list Sunday, having come off it just one day before, and it's more than likely that his season is over.

Duchscherer anticipates that he'll need surgery to resolve the problem in his left hip because it is just like the issue he had with his right hip that required season-ending surgery in 2007. He is not yet scheduled to see specialist Dr. **Thomas Byrd** again, but he believes he will go to Nashville for an exam soon.

Because Duchscherer went on the DL - his seventh trip to the DL in five years - the A's were allowed to bring back right-hander **Henry Rodriguez**, who had been sent down the day before.

Because the bullpen was taxed in throwing eight innings Saturday, Oakland also called up left-hander **Cedric Bowers** from Triple-A Sacramento. Bowers' only previous big-league experience was five games with Colorado in 2008, though he was drafted in 1996. The 32-year-old spent three seasons in Japan and one in Korea.

"Everything feels like it's going one million miles an hour," he said, smiling.

To make room on the 40-man roster for Bowers, the A's designated right-hander **Chad Gaudin** for assignment. Gaudin had allowed 11 earned runs in his previous four innings, and four homers in that span, but he was unhappy with the decision, telling the Associated Press, "I thought they'd have more faith in me."



**Briefly:** Catcher **Kurt Suzuki** returned after missing more than three weeks with a ribcage strain. He went 0-for-4. ... **Josh Donaldson** was sent down to Sacramento to make room for Suzuki. ... After rehab stints with Class A Stockton this week - **Mark Ellis**' starts tonight, **Coco Crisp**'s Tuesday night - both men are scheduled to go to Sacramento on Thursday, unless deemed ready to rejoin the A's.

### **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Acknowledging his mistake:** The fans were all over Jack Cust after he dropped a flyball in left in the seventh inning Saturday night. When he caught one an inning later, he tipped his cap - and they cheered wildly. "Then they liked me," he said with a grin.

### **Drumbeat: Suzuki returns, Duchscherer to DL, Gaudin gone and more**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Angel Stadium 5/16/2010 11:20AM

Kurt Suzuki got up at 4 a.m. Central time to catch his 6:10 flight from New Orleans to LAX, and a cab brought Suzuki and reliever Cedric Bowers to Angel Stadium at 9:30 a.m. - after an inadvertent trip to the convention center first.

Suzuki is in the lineup and batting cleanup. I asked manager Bob Geren if he'll need to get Suzuki a little more time off initially, and Geren responded that Suzuki has only played back-to-back games once during his rehab assignment, but that his ribcage issue is resolved and Suzuki is in great shape and used to playing every day. So I'm not sure if that means any extra rest in the coming days or not.

Justin Duchscherer went on the DL as expected after just coming off it yesterday. Duchscherer isn't optimistic that he'll be able to avoid surgery on his problematic left hip, but, he said, what he's most upset about is that he put the bullpen in a position to have to work the entire game. "I feel bad about what I did to the relievers," he said. Well, there was no way of knowing for sure that the hip would act up again until he actually got out there - kind of like Mark Ellis with his hamstring last month - so it's not really Duchscherer's fault. He's been told he has a congenital issue where the femur meets the hip joint, so the problem cropping up on both sides was not a surprise to his hip specialist, Dr. Thomas Byrd.

Reliever Chad Gaudin was designated for assignment to make room for Bowers. Gaudin has really struggled lately, allowing 11 earned runs in his past four outings, and he had given up four homers in his past two games. It sounds as if he was really ticked to be let go, though, according to the AP reporter who spoke to him this morning,

Bowers, a 32-year-old left-hander, played in five games with Colorado in 2008, but he has spent the better part of 15 years in the minors or overseas; he played three seasons in Japan and one in Korea. That is dedication to the sport. Needless to say, he's thrilled to be here. He said he feels like everything is going "one million miles per hour." He hasn't allowed a home run this year at Sacramento.

Henry Rodriguez is also back after being optioned yesterday afternoon. That's OK because he's taking the spot of an injured player, Duchscherer. A's travel secretary Mickey Morabito (yes, he's back! yay!) couldn't get Rodriguez a late flight to New Orleans, so he was still in Anaheim this morning. Gone yesterday, here today.

Josh Donaldson, as expected, was sent out with Suzuki's return. He did well, he'll be back at some point. Doing even better: Backup catcher Landon Powell. I can't see how he'd be an option to send out at this point when Mark Ellis and/or Coco Crisp return. In fact, even with Suzuki back, the A's might want to consider getting Powell into the lineup a little more often. Right-handed (switch hitting) DH?

Here's the lineup: Pennington ss, Barton 1b, Sweeney rf, Suzuki c, Kouzmanoff 3b, Chavez dh, Cust lf, Rosales 2b, Patterson cf.

## **Angels, Texas for real. Seattle? Get real**

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

Thoughts for a Monday morning:

-- The Angels showed up for real, at the A's expense, and they won't be going away. Neither will the Rangers, who have enough talent to avoid their annual midsummer meltdown.

Not so sure about Seattle. Ken Griffey is the key to that clubhouse, both last year (making Ichiro Suzuki one of the guys) and this one (a big reason Milton Bradley went there). It's not good when two teammates bust Griffey for sleeping in the clubhouse, and then the players blame the reporter who conveyed the remarks. Weak, petty stuff from a team that can't hit.

-- On a busy Sunday, the Tennis Channel held its own. A Rafael Nadal-Roger Federer final, for the first time in a year, was long overdue. And how strange to see it end on a mishit Nadal backhand that bounced so crazily, Federer missed it completely.

-- Decent finish to Game 1 of Boston-Orlando, but for the game as a whole, ABC's Jeff Van Gundy put it best with: (a) "Horrible;" (b) "This is like a bad first preseason game;" and (c) "Don't let your kids watch this."

-- After a season of nutty poses and rehearsed dance steps with his Cleveland teammates, LeBron James left the playoffs a bit too quietly. Watching Dwight Howard's "Superman" commercial, you get the feeling he's having a little too much fun, as well. At some point - ask Michael Jordan - a mean-spirited persona has to take over.

-- In Sunday's L.A. Times, *two* columnists dwelled on Kobe Bryant's "tank" job during Game 7 of the 2006 first-round playoff series against Phoenix. Seriously ticked him off. Wouldn't want to be guarding Kobe tonight - or at any time for the rest of the playoffs.

-- We're generally amused by Phil Jackson's gamesmanship, but not when he chides Steve Nash for (allegedly) palming his dribble. For one thing, Jackson wouldn't know a point guard from a lamppost. And the NBA's traveling issue vanished, for good, around the time Tim Hardaway came into the league.

-- Hank Haney, who recently resigned as Tiger Woods' swing coach, told the Golf Channel he knew about Woods' "issue with the sex addiction." Yo, Hank: Tiger steadfastly has avoided the details of his rehab. That isn't your call to make.

## **A's drop finale as sluggish offense stalls**

### **Cahill's fine effort scuttled as offense manages only four hits**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- If only the A's could make as much commotion on the field as they've been creating off it.

The club got the transaction wire up and running early Sunday morning with six moves -- a number that surpassed the number of hits mustered against the Angels in finale of a the three-game series.

Thus, after collecting only four hits, the A's were dealt their fifth consecutive loss in the form of a 4-0 defeat and suffered a three-game sweep for the first time this season. Furthermore, they walked away from a six-game road trip with a dismal 1-5 record -- the last five games of which saw the offense score just five combined runs.

The last time the A's were held to five runs over a five-game stretch was Sept. 8-12, 1979, when they started the streak with a 2-1 win and a 3-0 win, before being shut out in three consecutive games.

This Oakland team, though, hasn't won since Tuesday at Texas.

"We've run against well-pitched games," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Sure, our guys are pressing, and it's mounting up a bit. It gets a little on their nerves, but we'll regroup, go home to a different environment, have our hitters' meeting tomorrow and go from there."

Against the Angels, the well-pitched games the A's skipper described have come from three pitchers who entered the series with an average ERA of 5.01. The most recent pitcher to shut down the lifeless A's lineup was Joel Pineiro, who, on Sunday, tossed a shutout while walking one and striking out five.

Jack Cust's two base hits, along with Adam Rosales' double in the sixth and Ryan Sweeney's bloop single in the ninth, represented the club's only hits off the Angels righty, whose complete game required only 98 pitches. As a result, A's starter Trevor Cahill received no run support in the midst of compiling his longest outing of the season.

The 22-year-old right-hander, making his fourth start of the year, pitched seven solid innings, allowing three runs on five hits while walking none and striking out two. In the second frame, Torii Hunter reached second base on a ball that was slightly misplayed by center fielder Eric Patterson. It was ruled a double, and Hunter eventually scored on an RBI base hit off the bat of Hideki Matsui.

From then on, Cahill forced 13 consecutive outs before allowing a single to Howard Kendrick, which was followed by what the righty deemed a first-pitch "fastball in that ran right back out" to Bobby Abreu.

The result: a two-run shot to left-center to make it 3-0 in the sixth.

"Everybody knows I'm going to take the first pitch," said Abreu, second in the American League in most pitches seen (4.29) per at-bat. "Sometimes, they get surprised. They have to come at you. They don't want to walk you. If the first pitch is a fastball right there," Abreu will swing.

Cahill, who offered up an Oakland rookie-record 27 long balls last year, found that out the hard way. Aside from the two-run sixth, though, Geren delivered much praise for the youngster.

"He threw well," the A's skipper said. "He got a lot of ground balls. No walks. It was a good outing for him. There was just no run support.

"I actually thought he threw very similar to their guy -- a ton of strikes, a ton of sinkers and a lot of ground balls."

Cahill was commended just as much from the other side, where Angels manager Mike Scioscia spoke highly of him.

"Cahill pitched a terrific game," he said. "He retired, what, 13 in a row? We did some good situational hitting and supported Joel Pineiro's great effort with some terrific defense. ... It enabled him to finish strong and get the shutout."

That didn't bode well for the A's, though. They've been outscored, 32-5, in their last five games and have now lost 12 of their last 14 games -- numbers that don't concern Geren much, yet.

"Guys were swinging the bats well before we ran into a string of well-pitched games," he said. "I don't think it's a home-road thing at all. There's nothing that points to that."

Overall, the club is 17-1 when scoring more than four runs in a game and 1-19 when pushing across three or fewer runs, as it did in every game against an Angels team that entered the series struggling.

Handing a division opponent a jar of momentum, Geren said, is not a concern.

"They're going to have highs and lows throughout the season," Geren said. "They're a good ballclub, so they're going to have a lot of highs."

"They've got a good team," Cahill said. "Their starters, if healthy one-through-five, are all solid. Pineiro, he's their No. 5 guy, and he's a quality starter.

"Even though they have a couple guys down, they're still the same team as they were last year. Hopefully, we'll be able to grind it out and play well next time we face them. I'm sure we'll meet again soon."

### **Gaudin designated for assignment**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- Just one day after designating reliever Edwar Ramirez for assignment, the A's on Sunday chose to do the same with another bullpen member, by designating Chad Gaudin.

The transaction came just one day after Gaudin allowed eight hits and five earned runs in just 2 2/3 innings against the Angels. In 12 relief appearances with the A's, Gaudin posted the American League's highest ERA among relievers (8.83).

Gaudin, who also enjoyed a stint with the A's from 2006-2008, was signed as a free agent on March 29. His 40-man roster spot was handed to left-handed pitcher Cedrick Bowers, who played five games with Colorado in 2008 but has spent the better part of his 15-year playing career in the Minors or overseas.

Bowers, a 32-year-old lefty, entered camp as a non-roster invitee in Spring Training. He was 1-1 with a 2.55 ERA in 16 relief appearances with Triple-A Sacramento prior to his promotion. He struck out 26 in 17 2/3 innings and held opposition to a .161 batting average.

"Cedrick was throwing the ball pretty well down there," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We just decided to make a change in that direction for our bullpen."

Bowers has starting experience, but the A's skipper said the club would like to use him for one to two innings at a time.

### **Suzuki returns from DL, starts on Sunday**

ANAHEIM -- A struggling A's team, which has scored a combined five runs in four consecutive losses, delivered a healthy dose of news Sunday by activating catcher Kurt Suzuki from the disabled list.

Suzuki, 26, has been sidelined since April 24 with an intercostal strain. He was immediately placed in the starting lineup on Sunday, batting fourth for the club's series finale against the Angels. He was hitless in four at-bats.

Suzuki entered the game with a .254 average and four homers, which is tied for the team lead. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday and posted a .375 average with two doubles, a home run, four runs and five RBIs in three games.

He once again lends the A's a steady presence behind the plate, where Josh Donaldson and Landon Powell shared duties in his absence. Manager Bob Geren said Suzuki played in back-to-back games just once during his rehab assignment, but the A's skipper feels confident in the catcher's ability to be in the lineup on a daily basis, due to Suzuki's excellent conditioning.

The 24-year-old Donaldson, who made his Major League debut on April 30, upon his selection from Sacramento, was optioned on Sunday to make room for Suzuki on the 25-man roster. Donaldson appeared in 10 games following his promotion and made seven starts, a time during which he batted .154 with a home run and three RBIs.

"Your goal is always to be a Major Leaguer," Donaldson said while preparing to depart. "That first week here, it's something you can't ever picture until you're here. I'm glad I was able to break in early, and, hopefully, I can pick back up sometime soon. It's been real nice to be able to get my feet wet, so maybe next time, it won't all seem so foreign."

### **Duchscherer back to DL with hip trouble**

ANAHEIM -- Justin Duchscherer has yet to see a doctor since bowing out of his Saturday start due to ongoing left hip pain, but the right-hander knows he won't be receiving a glowing report when he does.

On Sunday morning, Duchscherer said he still felt soreness in the inflamed hip that has caused him pain since the beginning of the season and led to his early exit in his April 29 start in Toronto. Duchscherer was activated from the 15-day disabled list on Saturday to make his start, only to be scratched at the last minute and returned on Sunday, the seventh DL stint of his career.

Thus, the A's recalled right-handed reliever Henry Rodriguez, who was optioned to Triple-A on Saturday before returning to the club less than 24 hours later. The club couldn't get him on a flight Saturday night, so Rodriguez happened to still be in Anaheim on Sunday morning. The move was very much expected but still doesn't take away from the impending effect it will have on a depleted A's club, which currently has eight players on the DL -- including starter Brett Anderson (forearm/elbow).

Duchscherer was told that he has congenital issues in both hips, including the right, which has been surgically repaired twice. He realizes he may have to undergo yet another operation.

As a result, the A's could potentially be without the two-time All-Star for the remainder of the season and be left to fill a rotation spot. Manager Bob Geren said on Sunday that a decision has not yet been made on who will start on Thursday in Duchscherer's slot against visiting Detroit, but he mentioned Vin Mazzaro is "definitely a good option."

The right-handed Mazzaro pitched for Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday night, so his turn in the rotation would again come on Thursday. He struggled in one spot start for the A's this year against Texas, allowing four runs on two hits and four walks in just three innings.

Duchscherer plans to visit a doctor this week to determine the next step he needs to take in order to get back on the mound.

### **Worth noting**

ANAHEIM -- As expected, Coco Crisp (pinkie) and Mark Ellis (hamstring) will begin their rehab assignments on Monday with Class-A Advanced Stockton in High Desert. From there, they will play again with the Ports on Tuesday before taking Wednesday off and joining Triple-A Sacramento on Thursday. A's manager Bob Geren said the pair will stay with the River Cats "until they're ready." ... Adam Rosales has not committed an error in 33 games as a second baseman. He is one of just two American League qualifiers at the position without one, the other being Boston's Dustin Pedroia. ... On Saturday, the A's allowed 12 runs and did not walk a batter, the most runs in Oakland history with no walks.

### **A's faced with the task of slowing Ichiro**

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com

Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki is one of the few players in the Major Leagues who can go hitless in four or five consecutive at-bats and still be considered on a hot-hitting streak.

On Monday in the first game of the series between the AL West foes, Oakland starter Gio Gonzalez and his teammates will be reminded why.

"Ichiro is swinging the bat as well right now as I've ever seen him. He is playing well," Mariners manager Don Wakamatsu said. "He can do a lot of things. He has talent, No. 1, but right now, he's attacking the baseball. You are starting to see the gap shots and home runs. You see a little more aggressive approach."

Ichiro went 0-for-4 in Sunday's 2-1 loss to Tampa but is still hitting .351 for the season. He snapped a streak of seven consecutive games with multiple hits Sunday but still has hits in 22 of his past 28 games. Want efficient? When he grounded into a double play on May 2, it marked his first GIDP since April 15, 2009, a span of 736 at-bats. He has only 44 GIDPs in his career.

"He has that swing that is [so] time-oriented," Wakamatsu continued. "When he stays back, keeps his hands back, he has the power. He is hitting the ball harder than he did earlier in the season."

As for Gonzalez, he lasted just four innings in his previous start Wednesday, giving up four earned runs on nine hits while striking out three against Texas. The left-hander attributed his struggles to lack of command, saying he left too many balls up in the strike zone during the 10-1 Rangers' win. It was Gonzalez's shortest outing of the year.

"I battled," Gonzalez said. "I didn't have my best game. I was trying to throw strikes, but these guys make you pay for balls left up. Anyone's going to get hit when a ball's left up."

Gonzalez had completed at least 6 2/3 innings in three previous outings.

"[Gonzalez's] overall stuff was not as crisp as it has been," A's manager Bob Geren said. "They were hitting balls hard off him from the beginning. He did a pretty good job of limiting the damage, though."

Mariners starter Ryan Rowland-Smith is 2-2 with a 3.62 ERA in 12 games against Oakland in his career. He is 1-0 with a 3.31 ERA in three starts in Oakland.

The left-hander's spot in the rotation could be slipping away, and he needs a strong effort to rebuild his confidence.

"I am trying everything right now -- different mental approaches, different physical approaches, everything," Rowland-Smith said. "The last couple of years, I would get [angry] at myself or whatever, and I sort of had a nothing-to-lose mentality. Maybe I should get back to that."

### **Mariners shine on defense**

Casey Kotchman has played 217 consecutive games without committing an error at first base. He is just the second first baseman in Major League history to surpass 200 straight games without an error, trailing only Kevin Youkilis' Major League-record 238-game streak from 2006-08. On offense, Kotchman had one hit Sunday and is hitting .190 for the season.

### **A's have help on the way**

Coco Crisp (pinkie) and Mark Ellis (hamstring) will begin three-day rehab assignments on Monday with Class A Advanced Stockton in High Desert and join Triple-A Sacramento on Thursday. Geren said the pair will stay with the River Cats "until they're ready."

### **Worth noting**

After spending the previous four games as a reserve, Ken Griffey Jr. returned to the Mariners' lineup as the designated hitter for the three-game series finale against the Rays and went 0-for-4. He spent the weekend at his home in Orlando and traveled to St. Petersburg for Sunday's game via his private plane with an instructor. It's uncertain how Griffey will be used against Oakland.

### **A's put up little fight in sweep**

Associated Press

ANAHEIM -- Starting pitching was the key to the Angels' run of five division titles in six years. And it's that very same thing manager Mike Scioscia hopes will help Los Angeles overcome a shaky start to the season.

Joel Pineiro pitched a four-hitter for his sixth career shutout, Bobby Abreu hit a two-run homer and Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep of the Oakland Athletics with a 4-0 victory on Sunday.

"In this division, the team that pitches the best and plays the best defense is going to be on top," Pineiro said.

Pineiro had two shutouts last season with St. Louis, a two-hitter against the Mets and a three-hitter against the Cubs. This one was played in 2 hours and 6 minutes -- just two days after lefty Joe Saunders outpitched Dallas Braden with a five-hit shutout that lasted 2:05.

In the Angels' 18 victories, their starters have a 1.82 ERA. In their 21 losses, it's 7.13.

"We're only going to go as far as our starters are going to perform. And if this weekend is any indication, hopefully we're starting to make some strides forward," Scioscia said.

"After what Joe Saunders, Ervin Santana and now Joel Pineiro did, it gives us a lot of confidence that the depth in our rotation is going to play forward. And we need it. You can't overstate how important that is to us," he said.

Pineiro (3-4) struck out five, walked one and threw just 98 pitches. He retired 20 of the last 24 batters after giving up the first of two singles by Jack Cust.

"I was getting ahead in the count and was able to get a lot of groundball outs." Pineiro said. "Everybody knows the sinker is my pitch. So if I keep it down, hopefully it's going to get good results."

Pineiro, signed by the Angels after they lost John Lackey to free agency, was coming off a no-decision against Tampa Bay in which he threw 6 1-3 scoreless innings. He had lost his previous five starts against the A's.

"This is what we expect from J.P. I'm not talking about the shutout, but just making his pitches and changing speeds," Scioscia said. "We can really shrink the field defensively when he has his command."

Trevor Cahill (1-2) allowed three runs, five hits and no walks over seven innings. His catcher was Kurt Suzuki, who was reinstated from the disabled list earlier in the day after missing 19 games because of a strain his ribcage. The team went 7-12 without their RBI leader from last season.

Torii Hunter led off the second inning with a flyball to straightaway center field that was misjudged by Eric Patterson, who thought he was closer to the fence than he actually was. He leaped for it and it fell behind him for a double. Hunter advanced on a groundout and scored on Hideki Matsui's single.

Moments before Kendry Morales' groundout, Cahill thought he had a chance to pick off Hunter at second with the switch-hitting Morales up. But shortstop Cliff Pennington didn't cover the bag as Hunter slid back headfirst, and Cahill showed his frustration at having to hold onto the ball. One inning earlier, Cahill nabbed Abreu at first with the 10th pickoff by the A's staff.

"I was kind of frustrated," Cahill said. "I thought he was stealing and I thought I was going to get him cheating going to third, but he didn't go. In a close game like that, I was pretty intense because Pineiro looked pretty sharp from the get-go and I knew every run was going to be important."

Patterson made another leaping attempt in the sixth -- only this time, he made it at the fence in left-center and ran out of room as Abreu circled the bases with his fifth home run. Abreu had gone hitless in his nine previous career at-bats against Cahill. The homer followed a two-out single by Howie Kendrick that snapped a string of 12 straight batters that the right-hander retired.

"I don't think we saw as many sinkers as we normally would from him," said Kendrick, who had an RBI single in the eighth against Henry Rodriguez. "Early in the game, Cahill kept us at bay and was doing his job, and then Bobby gave us a couple more runs. But with what Pineiro did today, we didn't have to do much offensively."

### **A's implode in Anaheim, lose fourth straight game**

Sam McPherson, examiner.com, 5/17/2010

The Oakland Athletics had a promising start to the 2010 season washed away by an earlier road trip where they went 1-5 in Tampa and Toronto.

But they recovered on the subsequent homestand to take a series against the best team in baseball and make major-league history.

Now, this current road trip (1-4) through Texas and Los Angeles is once again wiping away the promise of earlier accomplishments.

The A's fell under .500 again on the season, dropping a very ugly 12-3 loss to the three-time defending AL West champion Angels.

And it wasn't even that close, even though Oakland had a 2-0 lead in the game after three innings.

Yeah, that didn't last long.

Perhaps A's should have known something was amiss when presumptive starter Justin Duchscherer was scratched before game time due to recurring problems with his injured hip.

Reliever Tyson Ross was pressed into starting duty, and instead of capitalizing on his successful, first three innings, manager Bob Geren let Ross pitch into the fourth inning where the rookie promptly got shelled for three runs.

Jerry Blevins was no solution, either, as he gave up three more runs in only a 2/3-inning appearance.

And Chad Gaudin once again demonstrated he has no business being on a major-league roster: in just 2.2 innings, Gaudin gave up eight hits and six runs.

Yes, you read that correctly.

By the time Craig Breslow made it into the game to pitch the eighth inning, the game was well out of hand. Breslow was the only A's pitcher to not give up a run, as the Angels reached double digits in runs scored for the first time all season.

Of course, they did: Oakland was in town!

The A's are often a tonic for whatever ails their opponents. Friday night, it was the Angels' starting pitcher with an ERA over 6.00 who shutout the A's four hits. Saturday night, it was the Oakland staff providing meatballs for Los Angeles to hit over the fence (Kendry Morales hit two home runs in the win).

As for the A's offense, three runs was an improvement over the previous 30 innings where they'd scored only two runs.

Chalk one up for moral victories.

Unfortunately, those don't count in the win column, and Oakland is dangerously close to slipping into third place in a weak division -- and watching their 2010 dreams disappear.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Godfrey's gem goes to waste in 1-0 defeat**

Rick VandenHurk allowed two hits over 7.0 innings as the New Orleans Zephyrs knocked off the Sacramento River Cats 1-0 on Sunday afternoon.

Sacramento's best chance to score came in the seventh inning when Chris Carter walked and new addition Brett Harper walked with one out. Adrian Cardenas would ground out and Corey Brown flew out to end the threat.

The 6-foot-2, 245-pound Harper, who was signed as a free agent by the Oakland organization, went 0-for-3 in his River Cats debut. Last season, Harper split time between the Las Vegas 51s and Albuquerque Isotopes (both PCL clubs), combining to hit .292 with 19 home runs and 71 RBIs in 103 games.

Harper was released by the Boston Red Sox organization after spring training this season before signing with the Lancaster Barnstormers, an independent league team.

River Cats starter Graham Godfrey allowed one hit, one run and four walks over 5.2 innings, striking out five batters. Jonathan Hunton (1.1 innings) and Brad Kilby (1.0 inning) closed out the game for Sacramento.

New Orleans scored its only run in the sixth inning. Ryan Klosterman opened the inning with a walk, and Lorenzo Scott moved him to second with a one-out single. After Klosterman stole third, John Raynor scored the only run on a sacrifice fly.

### **Texas League: San Antonio pitching shuts down 'Hounds**

By Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter Telegram

San Antonio Missions second baseman Andrew Parrino said it's easy to get a sweep when the starting pitching shined like it did over the past four games at Citibank Ballpark.

Nathan Culp gave the Missions another solid performance from the mound and his hitters backed him up with 11 hits, including three home runs, for a 7-1 victory over the Midland RockHounds on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

With the victory, the Missions complete the sweep of the 'Hounds and improve to 7-1 at Citibank Ballpark this year. The win also means that the Missions (17-19) take over sole possession of third place in the Texas League South Division, while the RockHounds (16-20) fall to last place.

"Whenever you win a series on the road is great, but getting a sweep is even better," said Parrino, who was one of four Missions to get two hits on the day. "Our pitchers are really keeping us in the game. And whenever you have a lead on the



road, it's always good to get the crowd out of it early and go from there."

Parrino helped the Missions get off to a great start against RockHounds pitcher Travis Banwart (4-1) in the first inning when he started a rally with a one-out infield single that bounced off of Banwart's right foot. Banwart stayed in the game but Cedric Hunter followed with a single to right and then Matt Clark belted a three-run home run to right field for a 3-0 lead.

"Anytime in the first when we can get something going off a starter is big," Parrino said. "The more pitches he throws, the more pitches we see, gives our team a better chance. The key against (Banwart) was getting a good pitch to hit."

Banwart entered the day as the arguably the RockHounds' best starter but exited the game after only 4 2/3 inning and after giving up a solo homer to Sawyer Carroll in the third and an unearned run in the fifth.

"Travis has had some really good outings for us this year and today he wasn't as sharp as he has been," Midland manager Darren Bush said. "He battled through it and pitched into the fifth."

Meanwhile, Culp (1-3) was cruising for the better part of his seven innings of work. The only sign of trouble the 25-year-old lefthander got into came in the fourth when the RockHounds had runners at second and third base with one out. But Culp escaped the inning unscathed when he struck out a swinging Matt Sulentic and got Steve Kleen to ground out to second base.

"He kept the ball down and was effective," said Bush about Culp.

The only run the RockHounds had came in the eighth against Missions reliever Aaron Poreda when Jermaine Mitchell walked and then scored on a Josh Horton double to cut it to 6-1.

Other than that inning, the RockHounds' offense was kind of quiet as Midland was held to four hits on the afternoon.

When asked if his hitters were pressing at the plate, Bush said, "They want to win and they want to have success. Every day they're out there working hard, they're just not getting the results. Maybe they are pressing a little bit because they're used to having success and they want to continue to have success. Every team goes through a phase like this at some point in the year."

The RockHounds now hope they can get out of their recent funk when South Division leader Frisco comes to town today to begin a four-game series.

"All we can do is continue to grind it out and continue to work hard and leave it out on the field," Bush said. "Sooner or later it will start to turn and everything will go the way it's supposed to go."

## NOTEBOOK

'HOUND BITES: With the win, San Antonio is now 9-3 against the RockHounds this season. That is the most losses the RockHounds have against any opponent this season. ...Midland is now 7-9 at home this season. ...Sunday's game was the 36th game of the 70-game first half Texas League season.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds welcome Texas League South Division leader Frisco to Citibank for a four-game series. Midland will probably send newly acquired LHP Ryan Edell (0-0 0.00 ERA) to the mound against Frisco's LHP Richard Bleier (2-4, 6.35). Game time is 6:30 p.m.

## **High Desert's High-Powered Offense Halts Ports**

**ADELANTO, Calif.** - In a series that's featured 82 combined hits over the first three games, Sunday's contest belonged to the High Desert Mavericks. High Desert hit up Stockton Ports starter Murphy Smith (3-3) for 15 hits as they won the third game of a four-game set by a final of 11-5.

It was Stockton that held a brief lead in the top of the first. Stephen Parker hit his seventh home run of the year—a solo blast off Mavs starter Jake Wild (4-0) coming with two outs to give the Ports a 1-0 lead.

Stockton's lead was short-lived, however, as High Desert took advantage of the only Ports error of the night to take the lead back in the first. With two on and two out, Johermyn Chavez hit a pop-up to shallow right-center. Second baseman Tyler Ladendorf, drifting back into right field, dropped the pop-fly, allowing two runs to score and giving the Mavericks a 2-1 lead. Both runs were unearned for Smith.

The Ports tied it in the fourth on a two-out RBI single from Jeremy Barfield, but High Desert grabbed the lead right back in the last of the fourth. With runners at first and second, Smith uncorked a wild pitch advancing each runner 90 ft. Trevor Coleman drove in the go-ahead run with an RBI groundout to second to put High Desert on top at 3-2. Denny Almonte, who wound up at third after the groundout, would score on another wild pitch to make it 4-2.

The Mavs began to pull away in the fifth. Chavez hit a one-out solo home run to right to make it a 5-2 score. In the last of the sixth, High Desert tucked the game in their back pocket. After back-to-back singles to start the inning, Edilio Colina laid down a sac-bunt to advance runners to second and third. Nate Tenbrink would be intentionally walked to load the bases. Smith would then yield his first non-intentional walk of the night to Rich Poythress to give the Mavs a 6-2 lead. Two batters later with two down, Scott Savastano would hit a two-run single to left-center to bring High Desert's lead to 8-2.

Smith would be lifted after Savastano's single and would take the loss on the night, going 5.2 innings and allowing eight runs (six earned) on a season-high 15 hits (six of the infield variety).

The Ports would have one final surge in the top of the eighth. Trailing 8-2, the Ports managed to load the bases against Wild who was lifted with the bases full and two down in the inning. Stephen Penney came in from the Mavs bullpen and walked Mike Spina to bring in a run, then gave up an RBI single to Barfield to make it 8-4. Petey Paramore, the possible tying run, would come to the plate. Paramore, however, would strike out looking to end the inning.

Wild would earn the win, going a season-long 7.2 innings and allowing four runs on seven hits while walking two and striking out two.

After Stockton brought the possible tying run to the plate in the eighth and failed to come through, High Desert put the finishing touches on the game in the eighth. With Jose Pina on the hill, the Mavs scored three runs, highlighted by a two-run homer from Savastano. Savastano now has two home runs on the year—both coming in this series.

Pina allowed three runs in 2.1 innings of work after retiring the first five batters he faced to open his outing.

Trailing 11-4, the Ports got a run in the top of the ninth on a leadoff solo home run from Todd Johnson, his first of the year. Penney, however, would finish the game by getting Parker to ground to first for the final out.

When all was said and done, High Desert pounded out 18 hits while the Ports finished with 11. In each of the first three games of the series, each team has achieved double-figures in the hit column.

The Ports will try for a series split in the series finale on Monday night in Adelanto. Right-hander Kenny Smalley (2-2, 4.74 ERA) will head to the bump for Stockton, opposed by right-hander Kenn Kasperek (2-1, 2.55 ERA) for High Desert. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Cougars Drop Finale to River Bandits** **Kane County settles for split in four-game series heading into off day**

**GENEVA, III.** – The Kane County Cougars let a 4-1 lead slip away in the seventh inning Sunday afternoon and ended up with a 5-4 loss to the Quad Cities River Bandits in front of 6,244 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars settled for a split in the four-game set and remain three games out of first place in the Western Division.

The Cougars grabbed two unearned runs in the fourth, as Tyreace House and Leonardo Gil scored on a fielding error by Quad Cities' shortstop Ryan Jackson. After the Bandits got a run in the fifth, the Cougars added two in the bottom half. Conner Crumbliss had a sacrifice fly, and House walked and scored on a wild pitch. Myrio Richard had two of the Cougars' six hits.

Starter Dan Straily pitched four innings of two-hit shutout ball. He walked four and fanned six, leaving due to a high pitch count before the fifth. Ryan Quigley yielded the Bandits' fifth-inning run, and Josh Lansford and Max Peterson (0-1) each got tagged for two runs in the seventh when the Bandits turned the game around. The Cougars used a season-high six pitchers, as Hector Garcia walked a batter and left due to injury, and Bo Schultz logged two scoreless frames. The six hurlers combined for eight walks and five wild pitches. Jason Novak (1-1) got the win for the Bandits (22-15), and Aaron Terry posted his sixth save.

The Cougars (19-18) are off Monday and return to action Tuesday with the start of an eight-game, seven-day road trip. They will battle the Beloit Snappers (22-15) on Tuesday at 4:30 CT in a doubleheader, as the clubs make up a rainout from last week. Justin Marks (1-4, 7.15) and Kyle Christensen (0-1, 9.00) are the scheduled Cougars pitchers. The games will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 4:15 p.m.

## Updates From Oakland A's Extended Spring

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Kyla Hill, OaklandClubhouse.com

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No news is good news, right? Not when it comes to players currently in Arizona for Extended Spring Training. Injuries and setbacks continue to plague a number of Oakland A's prospects. Kyla Hill recently spoke with Keith Lieppman, Director of Player Development, and he provided updates on some of the top prospects in Extended, including Michael Ynoa, Dusty Coleman, Mike Madsen, Chad Lee & more

The headline out of extended spring training is much the same as it is for the Oakland A's major league team – injury woes continue. A number of players who were slated for extended camp at the conclusion of spring training still find themselves trying to overcome setbacks and mounting frustration levels.

Right-handed pitcher [Michael Ynoa](#) is a perfect example of how overcoming one injury does not necessarily mean you are headed in the right direction. Ynoa, the young Dominican player who set the Dominican amateur signing record, remains the organization's most well-known, unknown player. Ynoa has battled through tendonitis in his knee and soreness in his elbow. He has not stepped foot on the pitcher's mound in a regular season game since he was signed in 2008.

"He got through those problems but then encountered wisdom teeth that were impacted, which caused him a two- or three-week delay," Keith Lieppman, the Oakland A's Director of Player Development, said.

"Shortly after that setback, he strained his back. We are hoping to get him on the mound in the next couple of weeks so that he is ready for the summer league in Arizona."

While Ynoa seems to be making progress overcoming his injuries, the A's first-round draft pick in the 2007 draft, right-handed pitcher [James Simmons](#), has not been so lucky. When asked about Simmons' progress, Lieppman stated that the doctors have not yet been able to locate exactly what is wrong with his shoulder and all conservative treatments are being explored before considering surgery.

Simmons began his career with Double-A Midland in 2007 and continued to produce solid numbers with the club through the 2008 season. In 2009, Simmons spent the season with the Triple-A Sacramento River Cats, but struggled with his command and ability to get hitters out, posting a 5.72 ERA in 119.2 innings of work. The youngster has had some shining moments in his career thus far, being invited to participate in the Arizona Fall League twice in addition to an invitation to big league camp in 2009. However, it remains unclear as to when and if Simmons will rejoin the organization as an active player anytime soon.

The injury woes continue for the organization, as notable young prospect infielder [Dusty Coleman](#) has experienced a setback to his surgically repaired wrist.

"He won't be back anytime soon. The fracture in his hand has not healed correctly and he may have to have to undergo another surgery to correct it," Lieppman said.

Coleman initially thought he had sprained his wrist while playing with Low-A Kane County last season. The injury revealed itself to be more than that, a fracture. Coleman was off to a great season, hitting .323 in April and racking up six homeruns in the month of May. However, the effects of Coleman's decision to play through his injury became apparent during June and July when he batted .214 with not a single home run. Despite the decline in Coleman's numbers, the A's promoted him to High-A Stockton before being shut down due to his wrist injury in the final weeks of the season.

The "what if" scenarios are never easy to figure out and neither is this one - what if Coleman had decided not to play through his injury. Would he be facing yet another surgery or would he be making his way up the minor league system?

For these three young prospects their short-lived baseball careers have been filled with injury and frustration. However, this injury-plagued story must go on with other updates from players in extended camp that are eerily similar:

- **RHP Mike Madsen** – Madsen, who has missed the last two years due to Tommy John surgery in July 2008, continues to work his way back to the mound. He experienced a minor setback after a few innings of work during spring training but the A's have been working with him, building up his pitch count and stamina on the field. Lieppman noted that he is doing well and pitching in extended, but that the A's will be looking to see if he can hold up under the rigors of throwing every fourth or fifth day.
- **1B Sean Doolittle** – Doolittle continues to experience problems with his surgically repaired knee to the point where he is strictly in Arizona working with a physical therapist. "He is another player that is frustrated and we continue to struggle with figuring out exactly the issue is," said Lieppman. Doolittle and the team will continue to push on little by little with the hopes of Doolittle recovering from his injury.
- **RHP Chad Lee** – The two years of arm problems seem to be continuing for this right-hander. According to Lieppman, Lee had a recent setback with his shoulder and is not progressing quite as quickly as the team had hoped. Lee spent a short time with the short-season Vancouver Canadians in 2009 before being promoted to Low-A Kane County.
- **RHPs Brett Tomko and Jason Jennings** – The A's signed the pair of right-handers to minor league contracts earlier this year. Tomko continues to experience a nerve problem in his right elbow that ended his season with Oakland last year. Lieppman mentioned it was their hope to have him pitching sometime this summer, but that the team expected this injury would take awhile to heal. Jennings, on the other hand, is not in Arizona, but is back home working with a physical therapist. In 2007, Jennings had season-ending elbow surgery to repair a torn flexor tendon in his right elbow. He is not expected to start throwing for another six weeks.
- **LHP Julio Ramos** – The 2009 pitcher of year for the short-season Vancouver Canadians is in extended after throwing one bullpen in spring training and complaining of soreness in his shoulder. Lieppman said that he is not expected to pick up a ball until June 1.
- **C Joel Galarraga** – The A's depth at the catcher position just got a little bit more shallow with the shoulder injury setback for Galarraga and the release of Curtis Thigpen. Galarraga has been told not to throw again until June 1. He has been hitting on a limited schedule and has been catching bullpen sessions, said Lieppman. Thigpen could come in handy right now with the injuries at the catcher position. The club had a secondary position for Thigpen, but he elected to take his release instead.
- **1B Matt Whitney** – Finally a good news story! Whitney was recently added to High-A Stockton Ports to begin the process of getting him healthy and to the point where he can play every day. This off season, Whitney signed a minor league free agent contract with the A's. Lieppman mentioned that Whitney has been dealing with fractures in his back, but is doing well.
- **3B Ryne Jernigan** – Jernigan spent the last two seasons with the Canadians. He asked for his release earlier this year and the A's granted it to him two weeks ago.